



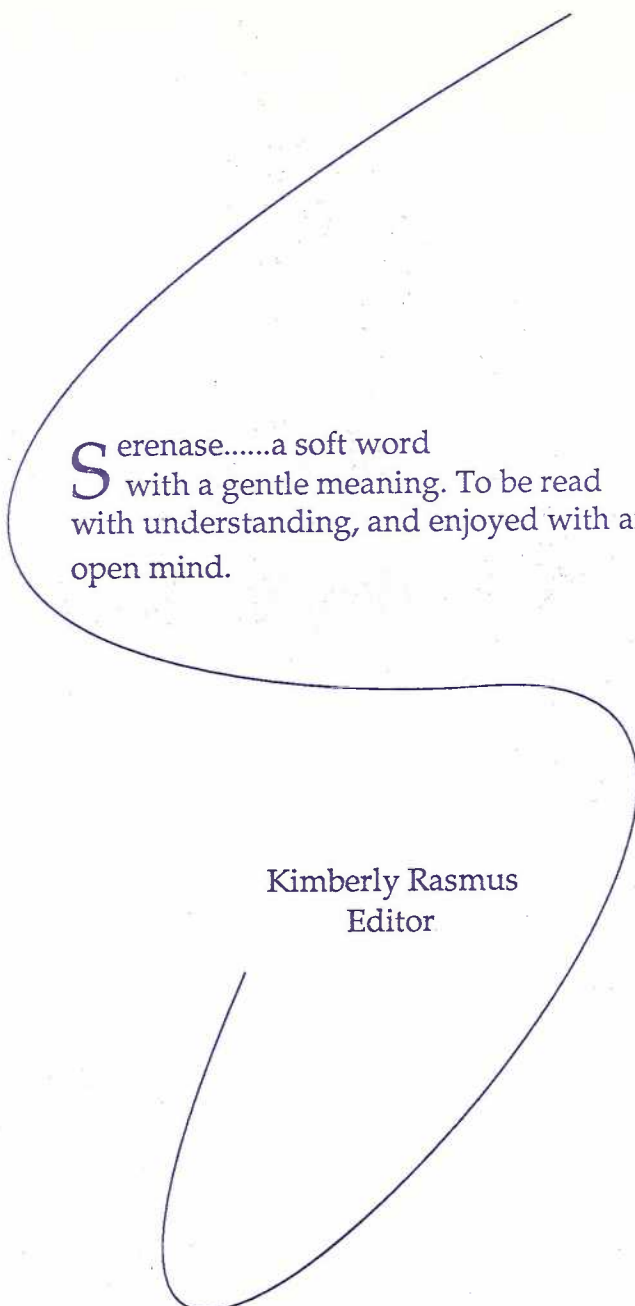
THE CURRY COLLEGE ARTS JOURNAL 1987-1988

SERENADE



Serenade

Curry Arts Journal



Serenase.....a soft word
with a gentle meaning. To be read
with understanding, and enjoyed with an
open mind.

Kimberly Rasmus
Editor

CONTEST WINNERS

Short Story

First Place: Catherine Hartzel

Second Place: Eileen Hughes

Honorable Mention: Michele Stamm

Amy Grant

Sharyn Kazarian

Poetry

First Place: L. Adams

Second Place: M.E.S.S.

Honorable Mention: David G. Vorhaus

John LaFleur

Bru D. Sogoloff

Essay

First Place: Lisa Maturo

Second Place: Cynthia M. Lennon

Honorable Mention: Eileen Thompson

Artwork

First Place: Sarah Snow

Second Place: Tom Gollner

Honorable Mention: Geoff Goz

Untitled

Catherine Hartzel

Tenuously at first, for the meshing of hearts is a delicate thing, Maria gazed into the blank wonder of her newborn son's eyes. They were bright blue and shining. He was strange to her, like child hurtled from some far-off star, ethereal and aglow, not to be captured. But he was hers, her first child. She would strive to know him, this beautiful, abstract being. She loved him already, there had been no hesitation.

She thought ahead to his future, and what it would mean to grow to manhood in today's world. Maria swallowed a heavy rush of sadness, thinking of the child's father. Derek was always rushing off. Away on business trips, off to find the next job, seldom divulging his inner wars. She knew his habits well enough; his penchant for striped socks and an orderly room, his distaste for what he considered "frivolous" conversation, and his love for the open road. All of his details were only a scant window-dressing to Maria. She yearned to know of his secret angst, the vulture which hovered over their every conversation, and sent him out walking and brooding on chilly nights. He slipped from her grasp like a precious, smooth diamond whenever she sought to draw his locked emotions out. He was somehow unknowable, yet his skin was tender in the flush of young manhood and his expression dreaming and winsome at times. He elicited a response of ardent caring from Maria, a response which had begun to

bother her. To hold the man physically, while his spirit eluded her left her unfulfilled. She felt as if she were married to his fine suits and colognes, his deep, obscure voice, but was denied the knowledge of his soul. She was different, at ease in the world of emotions and people. Laughter was the balm of her troubles; she would rather laugh giddily at the odd twists of life than walk through the desert of despair.

Maria had pressed for this child, and he agreed, viewing it as a solution to his wife's perpetual loneliness as they moved from town to town with his various transfers and ever-higher positions. In his dogged, silent way he was striving always towards a better type of life, hoping to show his wife an effort on his part, where words could not come. Derek saw in Maria the energy and colors of life, and in the beginning he had imagined her painting his austere consciousness with sunlit hues of love. She had been an art teacher before they married, a resplendent bird among new hatchings, and had suited her well. He had never understood why. Children seemed like frantic creatures to him. He had always viewed them with distaste. Of course, he did his best to be solicitous of the new baby, but there was a heavy stone planted deep within his chest, and the child could not help but sense it.

Yet Derek suffered in the void as well, his careful logic often leaving him cold. He could not appease the baby's night-wail, he would jostle the child emptily, almost with annoy-

ance, mentally distancing himself to project the child's future earnings. There were schools of business already who were interested in the future of Derek's son. These thoughts never did help to calm the child, however. Derek always felt somehow weaker each time the baby ultimately screamed for the warm retreat of his mother's arms, although he never knew just why.

Maria became all-encompassed with the infant, gratified by his blind, instinctive need for her. Her embrace was the child's sustenance, and like a spring bud, he unfolded limbs of rosy strength and thrived. When Derek arrived home from work, each day, almost brain-washed with calculations, he would walk with a precise clip until he reached the parlor door, where Maria would sit, nursing the vibrant baby, and say hello with an almost hopeful air. But in that pause before she looked up, he would take in her radiance as if it were sunlight too bright to behold, and the warm, bright eyes of the baby would flay him; he would falter, acutely aware of the arctic hush of his own isolation.

Inexplicably, he would grow stiffer, standing there, grey and upright like a walking tomb in his charcoal business suit. Maria would look up to see that falter in his eyes, and cringe in sorrow as Derek drew himself away once again, muttering of taxes and conventions in Germany.

Bitterness grew like a dark rose inside Maria, its thorns leaving her soul ragged and sapping her energy. Her child became her only concern. She sang him songs in the long afternoons. Often she sang songs from her own childhood, especially this one, in which she could still hear her mother's voice, wistful and sweet.

Aya, my heart is red,
it beats for a love I live to know,
weeps for a love I'm yet to know.

Aya, my hands are plain,
rich and strong like the finest grain.
Birds of waiting dance on my shoulders,
Flowers and spices drunken the breeze,
My eyes uplift in a seamless arc,
Up to his, which shine somewhere lost in the
dark.

Maria became determined that the child not grow up to be like his father. She wanted her son to be fearless and direct, and give himself to the people of the world, not its corporations. She winced to imagine her son riding off to work, lost in the rows of mica-silver stares, she saw how his precious, singular brightness could be dimmed irrevocably in the steel jaws of industry. What could she do?

Worry and loneliness began to take their toll on Maria. She was physically weakened when she fell prey to pneumonia and her body was slow in fighting the dark illness, which compressed her lungs, and whitened her to a fearful pallor. Her illness was long. Doctors were brought in, and a bewildering array of treatments tried, but Maria continued to fail, until she finally required hospitalization.

Derek was beside himself with worry. His savings, so slavishly procured, had gone for a large part to their grand new house for a down payment, and the rest was greatly depleted by

the care for his wife's illness. The doctors had lost their initial verve, the young woman seemed to have lost her will to struggle against the sickness. Derek was forced to make decisions. He would have to sell the house, and retire the maid he had obtained to tend to his son during Maria's absence. He would bring his office work home for the time being, and look after the child himself. He raged at the circumstances, cursed human frailty, and indeed cursed the heavy lead sinker inside his chest.

Somehow he felt that it was the cause of her sickness, his logic, his knowledge of air-borne viruses all seemed like feeble excuses, even as he repeated them to himself. On the surface, Derek worked it out. He had done everything possible for his family. Hadn't he? He was alarmed by the fading countenance of his wife in the hospital, surrounded by oxygen tanks and I.V. tubes. She was a solitary high note out of her once-vibrant sonata. She labored to breathe. Numbly, Derek sought to define this woman he had chosen for a wife, and whom had born his child. Where did her soul live? Why had he been so afraid to find out? Why did he withhold himself from her? She did not stir from her drugged sleep, and he turned to go. In the long sterile corridor whispers of doubt and blame seemed to echo as he departed. His black business shoes were staccato tapping which seemed to announce a-lone, a-lone, a-lone.

Home. He dismissed the maid, almost with relief. He had thought he detected the scent of his fine old brandy when she spoke. Well, he would be capable, he could oversee a company, one child could not be so difficult. Already, he heard a plaintive wailing

from above. He hastened, his tie still knotted, upstairs to the baby's room. He was startled to see the baby upright, holding the side of his crib for support, shaking it to further express the depths of his anguish. Derek stopped in wonder. When had he learned to stand like that? Had he been away so frequently that he never knew? The baby's cheeks were red and streaming with tears. Derek picked the child up, clumsily shuffling him from side to side. Still he screamed as if to burst. Derek constricted with annoyance, this was yet another difficulty he must deal with. Eventually the child seemed to exhaust himself, his mouth puckering downward sadly, Derek unconsciously mimicking the face as he contemplated what to do next. Of course, he was due for a changing. With great delicacy and the most possible distance, Derek struggled to press unwilling chubby limbs into a cleaner diaper, holding the used one high away from him with two pinched fingers. His face was that of a tortured soul. The baby still cried intermittently, as if he were a lost soul. He wanted his mother. Derek's composure was shaky as he flipped through cabinets to find the baby's food and formula. He found some apple sauce and barricaded the child quickly in his highchair, and scooped a sweet spoonful into the beginning of a wail. Cries were quickly replaced with greedy swallowing. Derek almost smiled. When the baby had his fill, Derek lifted him, a warm weight upon his shoulder. He stood still, shocked. He had never realized how warm and fragile a

baby was, how comforting it could be to hold one. The silky unprotected head of his child nestled into the hollow of his throat, the large blue eyes slowly closed their lids and gently the baby slept on Derek's shoulder. He was a warm lump on Derek's chest and instinctively he cradled the child closely with his arms, surprising himself with the spontaneous gesture. He was reluctant to put the child back into his crib, lest he disturb his sleep and summon more crying. He sat gingerly upon the rocking chair where Maria usually sat with the baby, still cradling him as he slept. Derek felt very strange, the warmth of the baby surrounded him, soaked him, filling him with a new tenderness at once painful to him. He was crumbling, somewhere deep inside the stone was flaking away to useless shards which could hide him no longer. He knew suddenly what had been missing, his naked heart beat painfully, sweetly. He was alive, finally. It was the birthday of his heart. "Oh, Maria, Maria", he cried out loud, "It must not be too late!"

Serenade

FIRST PLACE

Model of Peaceful Conformity
Dedicated to
Mary Ann (Marian) Evans
L. Adams

I am like water, I am model to any vessel
in which I am placed- The model of peaceful
conformity.

Like the bamboo, I bend in the mist of a
strong wind-

I offer no resistance to the course of
life, and pity those who do!

There are those people that will cast
their social impurity into my flow-

but like water my ever moving spirit
cleanses itself...

But most things experience a duality
day and night, Black and White, right chang-
ing to wrong.

Tell me, my friend, how will you with-
stand a tidal wave...

There is No Time
by Tom Gollner

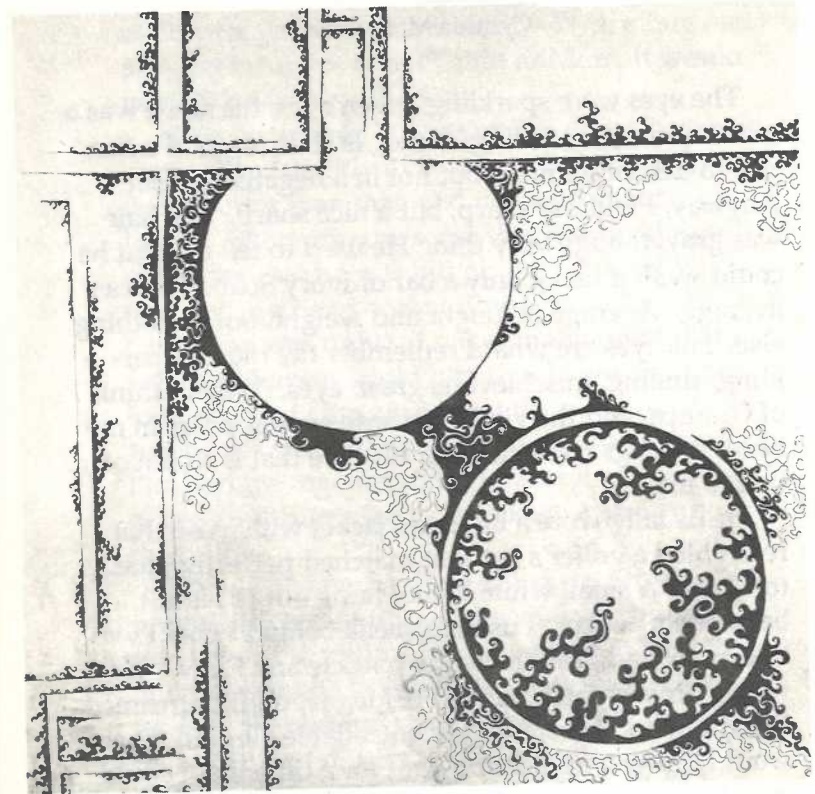
If we spoil our soil on Sunday, there will be time.

If we we murder our mountains on Monday, there will be time.

If we torture our trees on Tuesday, there will be time.

If we waste our water on Wednesday, there will be time?

But if we throw out all thought on Thursday, there will be no Friday.....or Saturday.



GREEN EYES

Cynthia M. Lennon

The eyes were sparkling, green eyes; the smile was a mischievous, but loving, smile. Is sharp a good adjective to describe a nose, but not in a negative sense? Anyway, I will use sharp, but a nice sharp. The hair was gray, though very thin. He used to tell me that he could wash it using only a bar of Ivory Soap. He was average. Average in height and weight, but in nothing else. His eyes are what I remember the most—sparkling, smiling, mischievous green eyes. When I think of Gramps, and the vision of those eyes appears in my head, it brings back the love, his love that is so important to me.

He usually wore a light, tan jacket with a cap that resembled a golfer's hat that matched perfectly, thanks to Gram. A small white hanky hung out of his left back pants pocket. I used to sneak behind when I was five or six and grab the white particle and RUN!! He would always catch me and tickle me, until I screamed in delight and burst into uncontrollable giggles. Then I would throw it at him and wait for a time that I could start the game all over again. He always won, but I never thought of it as defeat. I thought of it as something that Gramps and I shared.

At the beginning, I remember that he carried one large, brown cigar in his shirt pocket, where most would carry a pen. It was hidden behind his gold-rimmed glasses and brought out to relax with after a wonderful dinner that Gram had created. I say "at the beginning" because after his first heart attack, he wasn't supposed to do that anymore. I tried to watch him, to be so careful. Once in a while, though, I would

come upon him with the cigar set between his lips and a "cat that ate the canary" grin upon his face. I would frown and try to look like I was mad at him, but who can stay mad at your Gramps? I would end up smiling and nodding at his promise not to do it again. With a hug and an agreement not to tell Gram or Mom, it would quickly be extinguished.

He is gone now, but not really. It has been over a year, slightly over a year, but sometimes it feels shorter than that, and other times it seems longer. Shorter in the sense that it feels like only yesterday that he was hugging me and telling me that my boyfriend of that time was an "ass". (Of course, he was right). Longer in the sense that I feel like I have not told him that I love him in so long and that I am afraid that the vision of those green eyes is starting to fade. I have a picture of him and me together and I look at it at least once a day, almost in a struggle to keep a strong hold on his love.

He will always be a large part, an extremely important part, of my existence. I will always remember the smiling, green eyes or at least, if not the eyes, the love that shone through them for me. He was my grandfather...is my grandfather. The first of very few to accept me as me and not as something or someone who is to be claimed by another or taken for granted. Does that make sense? Well, it does to me and Gramps. He knows, he understands, and he still loves. When I look at his picture, or create his image in my mind, I can still see the smiling, sparkling, green eyes and the love. I will always remember the love, HIS love, for me.

Us Humans

David G. Vorhaus

What is it that makes us who we are?
Are we, by simple logic only visions
that we imagine to see us as beings?
What makes us Humans?

Is it our brains that maintain control?
Is it the unknown center of emotion that drives us
to see if we really are unique creatures?
What makes us Humans?

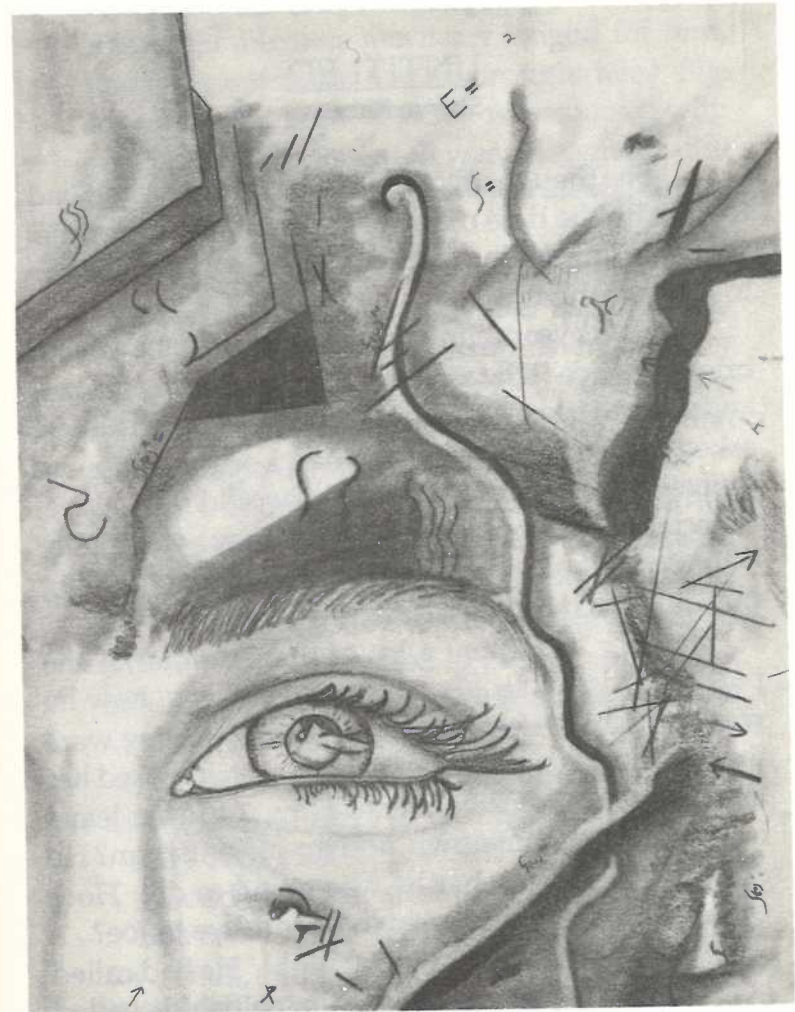
Men have spent lifetimes trying to expose an answer.
Wars that we wage are only extensions of inner conflicts
emotions vs. logic for human supremacy.
But, what makes us Humans?

If someone asks you "Are you in Love?" what do you answer?
"Yes, because my mind says so."- logically or,
"Yes, because I feel it within me."- emotionally.
But, why does that make us Human?

Ghosts from our past come out to haunt us - memories.
They attempt to destroy the last remnants of Pandora's Box.
Hope continues to be a ray of sunlight from an unknown source.
How does that make us Human?

To understand anyone and in turn yourself, take risks.
Venture beyond the limits set by logic.
Transcend the farthest reaches of any emotion.
Find your happiness and truth within yourself.
Share that with others as you share air.

Then and only then will you ultimately discover,
What it is that makes us humans.
You see the senseless hurt we inflict on each other
Then reflect and resolve within you never to hurt again.
Maybe then your darkened ally will have a light.
Follow the logic and emotion to the light - your heart
And then you might see what makes Us Humans.



UNTITLED

Sharyn Kazarian

She thought about him a lot these days. It had to do with the time of the year. It was summertime, the same time many years ago, that he had asked her to leave with him.

Many years ago, that summer, they had had a brief romance. That was the summer Joe was away, and she had been bored and restless. So when he had asked her out for a date, she had been glad for the diversion. She hadn't known she would fall in love, especially with someone like him. They were totally different people, but soon they found something they had in common: a desire to leave.

They had spent a lot of that summer in the park, talking about his hopes and dreams, how he was going to be famous and a star. And they were there, that night at summer's end, when he asked her to leave with him. She said no. How could she leave her family, her hometown, and go off with him? He didn't even know what he was going to do! How could she leave without saying good-bye to Joe?

They had fought bitterly that night. He had called her a coward, and she called him selfish. It ended with her saying, "I'll always be here if you need me," and him storming off, saying, "I'll be back." The next morning he was gone.

He never came back. She put him off as a phase she would outgrow. Joe came back after the summer was

over, and eventually she married Joe. The years passed, and they had children, and she was settled in. (But was she happy? She didn't know. Sometimes her heart longed for him, and the excitement he had brought her.) She loved her children, and she was content with Joe. Bored, but content. It was a decent life. But she never outgrew her phase, or the longing to leave.

She thought about him a lot these days. Maybe it was because the kids had taken to screaming, "Mom, there's your friend!" every time they saw him on T.V. or in the newspaper, or in a magazine. (Joe had told the kids that they had grown up with him.)

She was thinking about him one day when her son came running up to her. "Mom, your friend's coming to town!" It had been on the T.V. He was coming to town this summer as part of a tour. She tried to put him out of her mind but she couldn't. She kept hearing him say, "I'll be back." And now he was coming.

The second day he was in town, he called her. "Will you meet me tonight in the park?"

She didn't hesitate. "Yes."

"Good. See you around nine."

She told Joe and the children she was going for a walk, and met him on the hill they used to sit on and talk, all those summers ago.

But so many years had gone by, and she was very uncomfortable outside alone with him. She didn't know what to say, so after some small talk and a few minutes had passed, she started to rise. "I think it's best I leave."

He grabbed her wrist. "Best for whom?"
"Best for me," she sighed, thinking of her home, of Joe, and the kids.

"But not for me," he said, gripping her tightly.
"Not for me."

"You're very selfish. I just remembered that."

"No, not selfish. I want you—"

"What are you talking about?" she interrupted.
All of a sudden this was the same fight they had had all those years ago.

"I want you with me. I want to have you—"

"Want, want, want! You can't have me; I'm not a possession, you can't buy or sell me. I can only give myself to you." She stopped and glared at him.
"You're right, you're not selfish; you're childish and selfish."

"I'm not either!"

"What are you then?" she demanded.

"I'm ...I'm..."

"What?"

"I'm nobody! Nothing. Nobody. I'm no one special."

"Yes, you are. You have your famous name and that makes you special." There was hostility in her voice. "Tell me, what's in a name? What does that famous name get you? What doors does it open?"

"Stop, stop, stop!" he cried. "I don't want to hear it! Why are you doing this?"

"Want! There's that word again. Childish and selfish," she taunted him, "and oh, so special."

"No, I'm not! I'm not special." He dropped her hand and turned away. "I'm not special."

Her tone softened. "You think you are."

"I used to. Not anymore."

"Why not?"

He didn't answer the question, but said instead, "You used to think I was special."

"Yes," she said softly.

"Why did you stop?"

"I didn't. I have always thought you were special. You are very lucky. You did what you wanted to do. You achieved your success. You have everything you want."

"What about you?"

"I have Joe and the children,"

"Is that what you wanted?"

"It's what I have," she said simply.

"Remember when you said to me that you'd always be here if I needed you?"

"And you said to me that you'd be back."

"Well, I'm back—"

"It took you long enough," she said resentfully.

"Listen. I may have what I want. I don't have what I need. I need you now."

"Well, I'm here."

"Not here. I don't need you here. I need you with me."

"With you?" she said bewilderedly.

"I asked you before. I will ask you again. I'm leaving tomorrow. Will you come with me?"

"With you?" she repeated.

"Yes. You've put off this choice for a very long time. Now make a decision."

"Don't do this to me!"

"Is that a no?"

"What about Joe? What about my family?"

"Same old excuses."

"You called me a coward back then," she recalled.

"I won't now," he said, and he started to walk away.

She stood alone for a moment. She thought about her children. She thought about her husband, and her home. She thought about him. She'd been doing that a lot lately. She realized she didn't have to make a choice. The decision had been made a long time ago. She cried, "Wait!" and ran after him.

Serenade

Paroled

by John La Fleur

I've been here before
Released from prison once more
People know but don't remember
It's purely coincidental the eyes of
cynical grins

It's me...

Stop staring

I'm home

We'll never adjust from that insane
asylum of time

HONORABLE MENTION

The Amateur

by John La Fleur

A falling amateur escapes to his
invisible plans
Shaking that stigma of failure
Timing like dominoes connecting perfectly
Forgetting excruciating pain in training
This is it...

No more practice

I am free

HONORABLE MENTION

Earth Messenger

M.E.S.S.

I lie awake,
Waiting each night,
While the others sleep.

Lying very still,
I listen hard,
For the Earth Messenger, Wind.

Some nights he takes forever to come,
At times, doesn't arrive at all,
But to my window, he comes to rest,
When earth allows him the time.

I awoke once,
Heard his weeping,
And asked him what made him so sad,
He answered in a melancholy tone.

"I've seen today some children,
Who lie awake at nights,
But their reasons differ from your own.
I am crying for the children, whose
Tears can't ease their pain, and for those
Who don't cry at all."

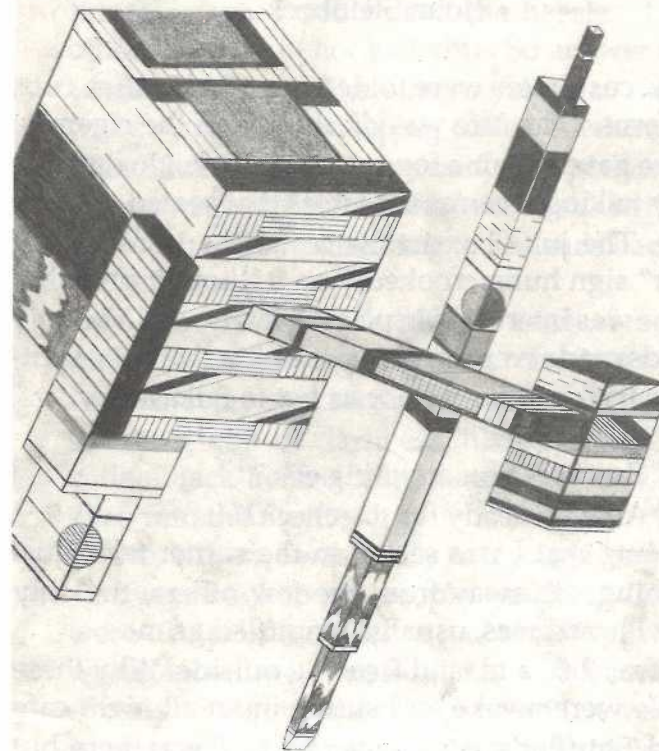
Silence then,
Lasted so long that I thought he had gone,

But then I heard the leaves rustle,
Saw them rising.

They fluttered and flirted in a ball-room manner,
As they waltzed with the Wind,
Making the pictures I thought,
Of a scattered rainbow.

I sat and watched,
'till cold seeped in,
Then back to bed I hurried.

The Earth and the leaves,
Sang me a lullaby,
And in slumber I danced and played with
The children who don't cry.



UNTITLED

Cindy Lennon

"The customers were folded over their coffee cups like ferns."

John Steinbeck

The customers were folded over their coffee cups like ferns. The cafe was dimly lit and the cigarette smoke gave the air a foggy, musty look. No one was really talking, even at the tables that seated three or more. The juke box in the corner had an "out of order" sign hung crookedly on it, though probably no one was interested in playing it anyway. The only sounds made were an occasional cough, or the waitresses trying to keep busy as not to fall asleep.

"More coffee?"

"Can I get you anything else?"

"Are you ready for the check?"

Being that I was seated in the corner table, just watching, far away from the few others, the only reply I heard was, usually, a muffled grunt.

It was 2:00 a.m. and freezing outside. Why these people were awake and sitting in an all night cafe called 'Shuffler's', I will never know. I was there, but I had a reason. We won't get into that except to say that I felt that I had nowhere else to turn. Riding all night and stopping frequently in little roadside diners seemed to be my only solution. But, I wasn't the issue, I wanted to get my mind off myself and try to imagine why everyone else was here and what they were running to or from.

"Lady, can I get you anything?" The waitress was standing at my elbow. "I only asked ya three times, are ya deaf or somethin'?" 'She is rude!', I thought to myself.

"Tough night?", I asked sarcastically. She just scowled at me.

"You want anything or do you wanna sit there all night bein' a smart ass? 'Cuz if you do, I'm tellin' ya, I don't need the hassle. I got others to wait on not just you. So answer me, whadaya want?" She almost yelled at me! It woke some of the sleeping coffee inhalers up. They stared at me for a second, then glanced at the waitress and stuck their heads back in their cups, like ostriches sticking their heads back in the sand.

"A cup of coffee, black." I answered. I didn't feel like arguing with the hag. She walked away and returned in seconds with a steaming cup of darkness. I never had my coffee black before but, I had never traveled deep into the night stopping at secluded cafes before, either. I was ready to try anything.

I went back to my people watching. There were two people sitting at a corner booth that was diagonally across from me. A man or boy of maybe eighteen or twenty and a young woman probably in the age range of sixteen to twenty. Neither was speaking, both looked sad and involved in their own thoughts or worries. A suitcase sat at the male's feet. It looked old and tattered. If my guess was right, they had run away, but chosen an awful night to do it. I glanced out the window to see tiny snowflakes

spinning to the ground. "Spitting snow" is what we called it where I come from. 'Yup', I thought to myself, 'they picked an awful night to be traveling around'.

My gaze swept passed them and continued around the room. It stopped in the middle of the floor. Sitting there by himself was an old man. His back was humped over the table. Hands that looked stiff, probably with arthritis, were curled around a steaming cup. He too, looked lost in his own little world. At one point he looked at his hand and slowly tugged off his wedding ring. He twirled it in his crooked fingers and then set it in the palm of his hand, made a fist and held it to his heart. Again, if my guess was right, his beloved wife had just passed away and he was alone in the world.

I watched for a moment, then I came to a decision. I got up and slowly walked towards the old, hurting, aching man that sat, alone, in the middle of this dimly lit cafe. I touched his shoulder and sat in the empty chair at his left. He jumped a little and looked at me. His eyes were glistening with tears, they make his green eyes seem brighter. He looked scared for a moment until, I think, he saw the warmth and possible my hurt, too, in my eyes. He struggled to smile at me and then with his right hand, he took my hand off his shoulder and held it in his own. Funny, though I knew that his fingers were crooked, all that I remember is the warmth that flowed through them. It was overpowering, almost a healing touch. We didn't even need to speak, all was said through the touch and the eyes. Before I knew it hot, wet tears were flowing from my eyes. One hit his hand and splattered onto my own. Another connection that

we shared. He reached over, slowly, as not to offend me, threaten me, and hugged me, with a strength that was unexpected from a man his age. It helped me. All my problems, worries, rushed out of my own aching body, soul. He, whom I didn't even know his name, helped. In a way that no one else had ever been able to, and ever even bothered to.

Everyone around us was oblivious to what had just happened. What I had just shared with this old man. They weren't even looking. It didn't matter to them. But...it did to me and it is something that I will never forget, nor ever share with anyone else.



Serenade

Earth Science

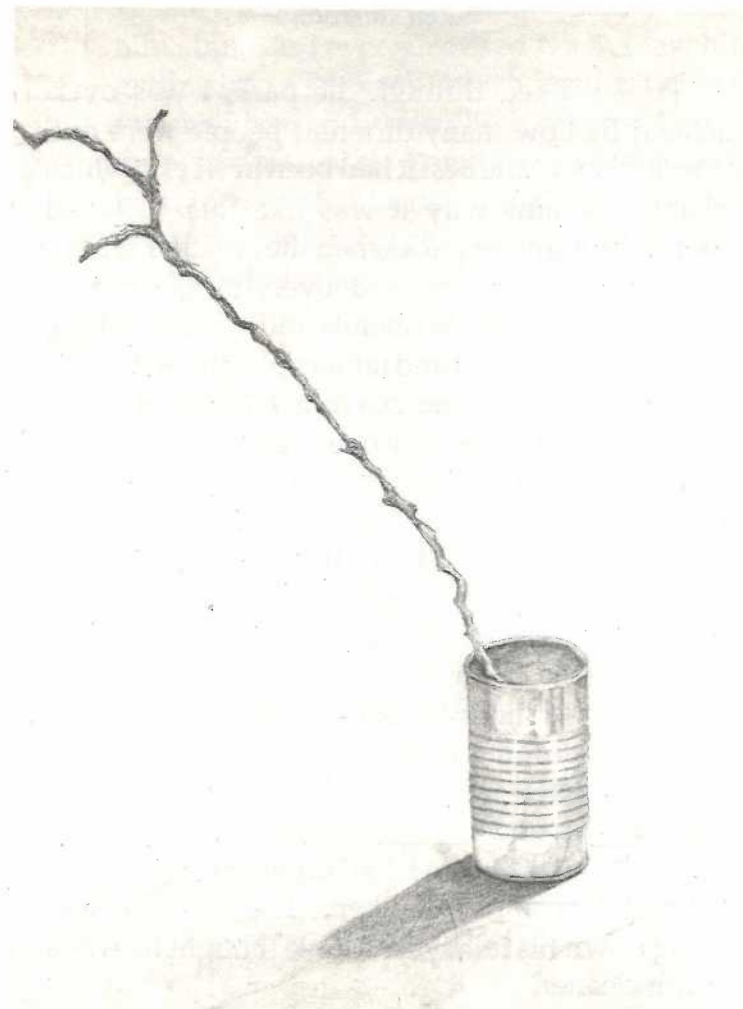
by Lisa Maturo

When I'm asleep, I reap
a new crop to replant-
I am budding.

I trowel the earth
with undying thirst
for pure soil-
I am budding.

I learn by a spurn
by a turn of the earth
and nurture new seeds-
I am budding.

Before summer ripens
I will weed my path clear
of all fear-
I am budding...



Untitled

Eileen Thomson

As I walked through the park, I was overwhelmed by how many different people were out. The weather was the best it had been in weeks, which probably explains why it was like this. I loved walking through the park when the weather was so nice, because everyone and everything were so pleasant. There were husbands and wives strolling hand in hand, mothers and fathers playing with their children, young people playing frisbee, and old people feeding the already overweight pigeons.

As I continued through the park, I decided to stop and soak up some sun. The weather made me so happy and excited that I was thrilled about simply being in the park...until I saw HIM. He was completely round, a perambulating carbuncle of a man. He was dressed in baggy cut-off jeans, a dirty tee-shirt, and tennis shoes; he looked as though he hadn't been near water in months. Just by looking at this man, I could tell he once had ketchup, mustard, chocolate cake, and a soda, because it was all on the front of his shirt. He now had three hot dogs in one hand and a beer in the other. The way he was sucking down his food you'd have thought he was a vacuum cleaner.

As I watched him walk by...well, actually, wobble by...I noticed something that I wasn't expecting to find on this grubby-looking man. This man who looked as if he had just jumped out of a garbage truck had on a gold watch and a gold wedding ring. As I

looked closer, I noticed that he was well shaved and clean cut. I was so shocked by this sight that I lost him in the crowd for a few seconds. When I looked for the man again, I found him...but was I ever surprised when I saw him getting into a jet-black stretch limousine! As I watched him ride away in a car that I never thought a man of his grubby looks would even be able to wash, I began to realize I shouldn't judge people by their looks, at least not until I got the whole picture.

Serenade

David: Age 9

by Bru D. Sogoloff

In Russia a young boy studies.
He studies in wide-eyed wonder.
He wonders of a land never seen.
He wonders of a language he can never use.
He tries to understand why he can't pray in peace.

They took his Father,
then
His Mother,
finally
His Teacher.

Leaving him alone with uncaring souls.

Too young to be jailed.
Too young for a labor camp.

He's placed in a home of uncaring souls.
To fend for himself against enemies young and old.

Unable to understand why he's treated like an animal.
His mind filled with two thousand years of hurt and
torment.
His blue eyes aflame with tears of outrage and
confusion.

No one talks to him,
No one listens to him,
No one cares for him.
The others children won't play with him.
He doesn't exist in their red uncaring eyes.

He's alone with thoughts dying fast,
He's alone with memories quickly fading,
He's alone with dreams vanishing in the wind.

He screams in pain.....no one hears him.
He cries out in the darkness.....no one's there to comfort him.
He cries in his pillow surrounded by uncaring souls.
His own soul dying with each passing second.

In frustration and rage he screams:

Why!

The uncaring souls scream:

Jew!

TORN

Amy Grant

Laura Graham sat with her daughter, Allison, on the couch, Laura watching another episode of Dallas. It was now ten thirty p.m. and she had not heard any word from her husband, William. William was a corporate pilot for an airline company not too far from their home in Plano, Texas. She wondered what could have happened that would have delayed him so much. Was he in a car accident? Maybe his boss just kept him after work for a meeting. She had no clue-and that disturbed her.

Fifteen minutes later, she was shaken out of her daze by a loud ringing. It was the telephone. She jumped up from her place on the couch and grabbed the receiver.

"Hello!" she said in an almost panicked state.

"Where are you?!"

"Well, when will you be home?"

"Yes...yes I know. I love you too. Bye."

She hung up the phone and slowly returned to where she was seated. She turned to look at Allison who was now fast asleep. Laura picked her daughter up in her arms and carried her to bed. As she set her down, Allison's eyes opened.

"Is Daddy home?" she asked in a sleepy

voice.

"No love, not yet." Laura answered.

Allison could not keep her eyes open any longer and nodded off to sleep. Laura walked back to the couch and began to watch Falcon Crest. William walked through the door several minutes later.

"Hi babe," he said.

"I was really worried, you know," Laura said.

"I'm sorry- I had a lot of work to catch up on at the office, I'm sorry... I should have called." He sounded extremely sorry.

"That's alright." Laura said with a half-smile. She leaned over and kissed him.

They lay in the bed on opposite sides. Laura stared at the ceiling, then at her sleeping husband. She loved him very much. She thought how horrible it would be if she ever lost him.

The next morning, Laura drove eleven-year-old Allison to school. She proceeded from there to the office in which she worked full-time. Her days were busy days spent by helping to support her family and trying to make ends meet. That night, she prepared an extra nice dinner for her family. Only two members were there to enjoy it. William did not come home from work again and he hadn't called. Two nights in a row. Laura did not know what was happening. She knew she couldn't handle this every night. She had to get to the bottom of this- and soon.

She waited up until eleven thirty when William walked through the door looking very tired.

"All right Will, what's the great excuse this time?" He immediately became very defensive.

"Hey now, Laura, don't get so riled up, I've had a hard day," he said.

"Don't give me that. I work just as hard as you do and still find time to make nice meals for my family, and take our daughter to school."

...I'm sorry, babe, it won't happen again—I promise."

Laura bowed her head down and sighed. William walked toward her and wrapped his arms about her. She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him. Was she right to forgive him?

What Laura didn't know was this would be an on-going dilemma that would eventually change her whole life.

Weeks passed and nothing changed. She would sit in front of the television an average of about three or four nights a week. Allison began to wonder where her daddy was and she really missed her special times with him.

"Mom? Why is Daddy never here anymore?" she asked.

"I don't know, love." Laura would tell her. Laura couldn't answer her daughter's question—she didn't know why either.

A million thoughts ran through her mind: Was he really staying late after work? Was he keeping a surprise from her? Was he spending his nights at bars drowning whatever sorrows he may have in drinks? Was he seeing another woman? She had to find out.

The next night, she told Allison that she was going shopping and hopped in the car and drove to William's place of work. She would follow him to where he was going—if he was going anywhere. She sat parked in the lot

outside Hampton Aviation until she saw William walk out. She watched him get into the car and pull away. She immediately started her engine and followed about two cars behind. He stopped in front of a small house not far from the airport. She hid herself in a driveway and watched her husband walk in the door. She wondered whose house this was. She proceeded to wait for something to happen.

Approximately twenty minutes later, William walked out of the house. He was not alone. A tall woman with brown hair was next to him and they were holding hands. Laura all of a sudden felt queasy. She waited for their car to disappear around the corner and she started the engine once again and flew home in a frenzy. She was angry and sad and surprised all at the same time. How could he lie to her? How could he even think of doing this to the woman he promised to love, honor, and cherish forever?

She arrived home and ran into the bedroom and threw herself on the bed crying. Allison ran in.

"What's the matter, Mom?" she asked. She had seen her mother cry only once before when her father passed away.

"Nothing love—nothing," she answered trying to control herself. Allison didn't leave, but instead stayed to comfort her mother.

"It's Daddy isn't it Mom—isn't it!" she was crying now too.

"What's he done Mom? Tell me." Laura dried her eyes and comforted Allison. She began,

"Allison...I found your father with another lady." Allison just stared at her mom expecting her to say,

"Great joke, huh!" But her mother said no such thing. Her eyes began to fill with tears and a few escaped down her cheeks. Laura held Allison tight.

"Allison, love, we have to be strong, okay? We'll stick together, right?"

"Right." Allison said choking on her sobs.

"I can't believe this is happening to us, Mom!"

"Me either, love."

It was midnight before William got home and Laura was up waiting for him. He no more stepped through the door when Laura started questioning him.

"Where were you, William?"

"John and I went out for drinks after a meeting at work."

"Bull——!" She yelled. "Tell me the truth, damn it!"

"Laura, that is the truth! I wouldn't lie to you!"

"Yeah? Well now maybe you can tell me who the woman is you were with!"

William was shocked. He was silent for a moment then managed a few forced words.

"How did you find out...?" he said.

"I followed you after you got out of work tonight."

"Oh," he said.

"Oh'? Is that all you can say- 'OH'?!" she was furious.

Allison was in her room listening to the whole conversation. She was in tears. She was confused as to why he would do a thing like

that to his family. At that moment, she decided that she hated him—hated him so much she wished he would die. At once she stopped crying and began to remember the wonderful times she had with her father—playing baseball in the back yard on cool summer evenings, carving the pumpkin at Halloween, the fishing trips, the difficult task of learning to ride a bicycle that her dad had helped her with. This was all shot to hell now. There would be no more special times. She didn't want to remember these times; she wanted to set fire to them and let them burn away. Allison was snapped out of her trance by the sound of her parents' voices.

"I have forgiven you too many times, William, but not this time!" Laura yelled.

"I'm sorry, Babe! I really am!" William yelled back.

"I've heard that before—you really don't expect me to believe it, do you?" She then ran into the bedroom and locked the door behind her. She was crying again.

Lying on the bed, she began to remember the wonderful times she'd had with William. The quiet, cozy evenings spent together, the unforgettable moment of their daughter's birth, and the trips taken. But one memory stuck in her head like crazy glue—their wedding day. It was the happiest day of her life, and it looked as if it was all over. It was all up to her how she would handle this. She didn't know if she still loved him or not. She couldn't forgive him and risk the chance that this would happen again—and again and again.

Laura hardly got any sleep that night or many nights after. She and Allison grew closer than they

had ever been before. All they had was each other to lean on. They shared the tears and comforted each other during this hard time in their lives.

The holidays were rough times in the Graham house. They didn't feel like a family, and everything was very awkward and strained.

William was not living at home anymore, but insisted that everything with the other woman was over.

He would come to the house from time to time to take Allison out for a special day, but, to her, they weren't special anymore. She would come home upset and sometimes in tears wishing that her dad didn't just drop her off and leave. She wanted him to stay and live with his family—the way it should be.

While hearing that everything had been ended with the other woman, she was very hesitant about even thinking that things might work out. She had to think about what was right for her and Allison, how they could be happy again. It was a decision she would have to make. A decision that would change her life forever.

It was in the month of November that Laura and William went to see a marriage counselor. Both felt better after discussing their problems openly. After hearing both sides of the story, the counselor decided that an indefinite separation would be needed. Maybe after some time apart so Laura and William could think, things would get themselves in order.

Laura felt hopeful at this point. She won-

dered if her husband felt hopeful too. Did he want things to work out? Or, did he want everything to end? She decided to think on the positive side of things.

After about two weeks, she received a phone call from William saying that he would like to meet for dinner with both her and Allison. Laura agreed thinking that it would be nice for Allison to see her father—and she wanted to see him too.

Laura was in front of the mirror looking at herself to make sure she looked as beautiful as she possibly could. She heard the doorbell ring. "This is it," she thought. She ran out of the room and bolted for the door. She opened it.

"Hi." William said.

"Hi William," she said back.

This whole deal reminded her of the days when William and she were dating each other. She let him in and Allison came flying down the hall to see him.

"Daddy!" she yelled.

"Hey Alli!" he said as she flew into his arms. "I missed you, sweetheart." Allison said nothing, but just thrived in being in her dad's arms again.

At dinner, Laura and William talked about how their lives were going. There would be occasional moments of silence when the two would just stare at each other as if trying to send messages. Allison watched her parents, looking for some sign of good. Soon, dinner was over and they all went back to the house. Allison went to bed and Laura and William were left talking on the couch. It was an awkward moment, but both did not want to let the other know of their uneasiness.

"So things are going well?" William said.

"Yes." Laura said. "we're getting along just fine."

"That's great. And Allison, how's she doing in school? Are her grades good?"

"As good as they ever were." Laura answered.

A moment of silence overcame them.

"William, I've decided that Allison and I are going to move to Connecticut." She blurted out all at once.

"Connecticut? Why?"

"It would be better for us there."

William bowed his head looking very sad. Laura had promised herself that she wouldn't let him make her feel guilty. She questioned her will power when a tear ran down his face.

"I want more than anything to make things right—I want to be a family again—I love you both so much."

He was crying hard now. Laura put an arm around William's shoulder. She couldn't tell him that everything would be all right, she wouldn't let him manipulate her anymore.

"It can't be until you prove to me, to us, that this will end. You have hurt us so badly, William, it will take time to build up the trust again." Laura said firmly. William was silent again.

"I understand," he said finally.

Laura showed him to the door and he kissed her a tender kiss on the lips. She was not sure if that should have happened.

Within the next month, Laura and Allison were on their way to Connecticut. They moved

into a small apartment close to the school that Allison would be attending. Things were going well, and they both liked their life there a lot. Every two weeks or so, William would call to see how they were doing. In one phone conversation, it was decided that he would come up for Allison's birthday in July.

July came and Laura and Allison were at the airport to pick up William from his flight. On the way home, all of them talked and talked. Allison updated him on how her school was going and how she had made so many new friends. He was happy at how well she adjusted to a new place.

Back at the apartment, they all had birthday cake and ice cream. Laura couldn't help but think how nice a time it was to be together again. Seeing her daughter's face light up made her feel all warm inside. Maybe things were starting to look up. Maybe this would all be over. Over, she thought, but never forgotten.

Before William left the house to return to Texas, it was decided that he would move up to Connecticut—but be living in different quarters. He swore that things were over with the other woman. And Laura believed him.

William rented an apartment in Stratford, Connecticut. He made faithful visits to Laura and Allison. The holidays were spent as a family, but remained very awkward for, after all the celebration was over he would return to his apartment. This left Laura and Allison feeling very emotionally drained.

This whole deal started Laura wondering if things were right enough to start over again. Her mind was constantly occupied with this thought. But why not? William told Laura to her face that there was no

"other woman" anymore. Every spare moment he had was spent with them, and there were wonderful moments that brought back all the memories of the family times that were treasured so dearly. Allison spoke non-stop about how she loved having him around again. There were many times when Laura would come so close to picking up the telephone and saying, "Come home, Babe." She missed him and she knew it.

It was Friday night and she sat in front of the television switching the channels around. She found herself watching an old episode of "Dallas". It suddenly jarred her memory back to the nights that she'd sat in front of the T.V. waiting for William to come home. It was then that she picked up the phone and dialed William's number. The phone rang about five times before someone on the other end picked it up.

"Hello." said the voice on the other end.

Laura froze. The voice on the other end was a woman's. At that very moment, every dream she had was shattered. She slammed the phone down. She wanted to cry-bawl her eyes out. But she didn't. She wouldn't let it happen. He lied to her, again. He was leading a double life. How could anyone stoop so low as to do that? He put her and Allison through a living hell and just when they climbed out, he threw them back in again. She pondered as to what she would do. She decided that she would confront him with his unforgivable mistake. She would see what he would say this time to make

Me
by M.E.S.S.

Who am I

What I am

I am not only one

But four, like the seasons

I am cold

I am harsh, mean and stern

I am Winter

I am new

I am clean, warm and pleasant

I am Spring

I am hot

I am fast, exciting and fun

I am Summer

I am experienced

I am colorful, beautiful and wise

I am Fall

Who are you

SHORT STORY
HONORABLE MENTION

The Deer Hunter
by Michele Stamm

The bright noon rays seeped through the thicket of trees, drenching an assortment of multicolored leaves that covered the forest floor. The warm glow of the sun revealed the true hues of the foliage season: the golds, greens, oranges, yellows and the most vibrant of all—red. But in this forest a darker side of red can be found. It is the blood of a hunted animal.

Kneeling by the riverside, Michael cupped his hands together and refreshed his parched face and throat with the fresh chilly water. The sun shining on his blonde hair created an aura that overwhelming surrounded his entire body. His broad shoulders topped off a lean back and fit body. The water's reflection revealed so much more than the smooth facial features that were obvious to the common eye. The light on his jawbone and neckline revealed masculinity and self-confidence. But in the shadows of his face a naive child could be found, who appeared fearful, and in need of direction. Michael's bushy eyebrows were raised, and his forehead was creased as his deep blue eyes peered across the river in discontentment. His mind jumbled for truth as he awed at the wonders of nature, and

pondered the forces that destroyed it.

Sitting in the cool shade of a grand oak tree, Michael's companion bit eagerly into a well ripened apple. The tree's shadow was cast over Dave, creating an aura of darkness and intrigue. His jet black hair was complemented with a touch of gray over the ears and set of piercing brown eyes, eyes that revealed a basically care-free lifestyle.

Out of the corner of Michael's eyes, he saw Dave quickly put his apple down, hop to his feet, and reach for his instrument without ever moving his eyes. As Dave placed the gun into his position and aimed, Michael whipped his head around just in time to see the object of Dave's desire—a full-grown buck. BANG! The shot could be heard around the world or so it seemed to Michael whose body shivered with the echoing sound. The deer's head perched up, as he dodged the shot. Dave missed. The deer ran in fear, but with remarkable grace and agility. It appeared to be gliding across the air. In hot pursuit Dave ran through the forest, leaving whirlwinds of leaves in his tracks. Michael stood watching. His statuesque stance remained frozen, as did his feelings terror that collided with the compassion he felt toward the animal.

"Thank God he got away," Michael said aloud to himself.

Dave got about four hundred yards away before he began to make his way back. Although he was disappointed that the buck got away, he knew the deer was accessible and he became overpowered with determination.

"That was it!" Dave exclaimed as he motioned toward the general direction that the deer was last

seen. "That's the one I've been trying to get for the past three seasons. Everyone wants to claim it, but this weekend I have first dibs!"

Michael's response was a mere nod of acknowledgement. How could he possibly react? When the two friends agreed to escape for a weekend, roughing it sounded like the perfect solution. Dave knew the perfect place and Michael jumped at the chance to endure the wilderness and go deer hunting with him.

Michael's disappointment arrived when the realization of hunting set in. He was confronted with mixed feelings, concepts, and fears that he had not dealt with before. He could not come to grips with the idea of hunting as a sport. People are brutally murdering innocent animals for no valid reason, except maybe to improve their aim.

"Must hunters continually sacrifice live creatures for mere pleasure?" he battled over and over again in his mind.

For a life and death situation he could understand and even accept the idea. He wondered if people actually felt more powerful after ending the life of a creature who is weaker than themselves. He became mystified and horrified with the realization that there are people in this so-called civilized world who actually derive satisfaction from the gruesome art of hunting.

"Why don't we take a break now, it's almost lunchtime anyway." Michael suggested.

Dave hesitated for a moment and then agreed.

"After all, we have been up and going since the break of dawn, and it is nearly 1:30 p.m. now. I know I need a rest, and I am sure that you do too, although your adrenaline is too pumped right now for you to realize it. Sit down and relax while I gather some wood and start a fire."

"Great," Dave stated sullenly with a touch of sarcasm. "We'll cook up the hamburgers and hot dogs that we brought, rather than the fresh deer meat we should be devouring!"

Michael's stomach did a somersault with that unappetizing thought.

Then Dave added, "I'll help out so we can finish quicker. The sooner we get a move on, the better, especially since those deer tracks are so fresh! I can taste that buck already!"

Within forty-five minutes the two friends were back on the trail. Dave, walking a few yards ahead of Mike, cradling his gun in his arms like a soldier going off to battle. Dave anticipated his enemy being defenseless, the odds stacked against him in Dave's favor.

They walked for over three hours, not seeing any form of wildlife or, in Dave's case, the enemy. Michael was enjoying the scenic landscape that nature had to offer. They had been walking on a small path that was cut into the woods. They were not walking on the middle of it, but off to the sides. A small stream ran lateral with the path. Mike noticed an occasional tree had fallen over the water, making a natural bridge. He wondered how this path came to be, what kinds of people had passed on it, and their many destinations.

Dave, who was still walking ahead of Mike,

stopped suddenly. "I know of clearing up ahead where the deer might be grazing for food," he whispered softly.

Mike almost chuckled out loud, for there was a comedy involved in the way Dave spoke softly, as if someone would hear them. He whispered back, "Sounds good. You're the expert."

About fifty yards up the path, they veered off the road and into the shrubbery. They crossed the brook by way of a natural bridge and began to make their way through ankle-high grass where the trees started to thin out. Up ahead, another hundred yards, was the clearing Dave was talking about.

They settled themselves among a cluster of bushes, a fallen tree, and several smaller elms hidden from the clearing. Dave's eyes were transfixed on the clearing, while Michael wished he had a good book to read.

After several hours of the waiting game, darkness set in. They had seen nothing and decided to pitch tent near by.

Following a hearty campfire supper, Michael grabbed the coffee pot that was hanging over the fire and poured its remaining contents into his mug. Returning it, he retrieved a bottle of brandy from a knapsack and poured a drop of it into the coffee, then swirled it around, mixing the two ingredients together. A quick swig from the mug warmed his insides. Mike looked up at Dave and said, "I don't understand how you can shoot a defenseless animal."

Dave sat across from Michael, mechanically cleaning his rifle and putting the pieces back together again. His face had an orange tint, drawing the light from the fire between them. "It's the challenge," Dave answered. "The challenge of tracking the animal, waiting for the right moment, lining it up in your sights, pulling the trigger, and seeing your shot hit your target. It's a chance at beating nature at its game. There's a natural high I get after pulling the trigger."

After rubbing an oily rag up and down the rifle, he stood up and told Michael he was going to settle down for the night. "I feel it is going to be a good day tomorrow," he said as he walked by Michael carrying the rifle, and entered the tent.

Michael decided to sit by the fading fire for a few minutes more, enjoying the peacefulness that autumn brings in this climate. He gave the fire one last stir, moving the charcoal fags among the ashes until there was an orange glow from the kindling. Leaning back in the chair, he lit his pipe with the lighted end of the stick he used to stir the fire.

He sat and listened. He listened to the stillness of the night, content with its calmness, its state of concord. Letting the pipe draw its aroma from the form the tobacco in the bowl, he started towards the heavens above. Its stars twinkled and gleamed in the clear night, while forming constellations millions of miles away. Scanning the sky he came across the only recognizable formation to him, the Big Dipper. A bright star at the tip of the handle set the course for the amazing structure.

He sat there in front of the fire, thinking of what Dave had said about the challenge of hunting. His thoughts wandered around in his head as he pondered what tomorrow could bring. A slight breeze stirred the bare tree tops and sent a small chill through his body. Another hit from the coffee and brandy mixture took the chill right out. He was content just sitting in his small campsite within the nature that surrounded him.

He was stirred out of his trance by some rough, hoarse noise coming from one of the tents. Dave, who was fast asleep, was snoring up a storm. The fire had burnt out, the coffee was gone, and Mike's eyes were getting heavy. He decided to hit the sack.

The sun that began to rise above the tree line revealed a light frost covering the ground from the night before. The clear sky of the night past were replaced with soft clouds that sailed across the bright blue sky. A cool, steady breeze could be heard above the tops of the trees, and the branches scraping against each other gave evidence of this.

Michael was the first to rise and shine and, after a few morning stretches, he began to prepare a breakfast of bacon, eggs, and hot coffee over the fire. A strange feeling overcame Mike, a sense of being watched. He felt that someone was watching him from a distance. He slowly lifted his head as his eyes darted

around. He gasped at what he saw. The buck, with its muscular legs and elegant beauty, was feeding on the grass not more than twenty feet away from him.

Slowly he raised his instrument toward the defenseless animal. His adrenaline was pumping as he aimed at his target. He held his breath as he pulled the trigger and shot. He repeatedly gave off five more shots as the deer lifted its head, sensing the human scent around him, and darted off into the woods.

He experienced the natural high, the rush that Dave was talking about last night. Would Dave believe Michael when he tells him of this experience? He will certainly be surprised when he sees the results of his shooting, the six pictures of the beautiful, live buck that were taken with the instrument Michael chose to use—the camera.

Serenade

Curry Arts Journal

House on the Hill

by Ilene Springer

In the early morn the sun shines
I hear the chimes
blowing on the porch
in the wind.

In the afternoon the wind blows,
whispering my name,
blowing on the porch
in the wind.

House on the hill
open eyes to great awakenings,
house on the hill,
something I go back to.

In the evening as the wind gets colder,
the night grows older,
my eyes are closing,
a melody chimes in the wind.

I can almost hear the children
and I'm looking at me,
a memory that lies within.

House on the hill
close my eyes to comforting sounds
House on the hill
something I go back to.

RUNAWAY HEARTS

Eileen Hughes

I heard chewing gum snapping, the high heeled shoes clicking and the outrageously loud laugh before I saw her. It gave me a few moments to brace myself for the onslaught of energy, commotion and the feeling of unrequited passion that were about to barge into my office and into my heart like an out of control train careening down a mountain: clanging, screeching, terrifying and yet somehow, humorously, outrageously, ridiculously fun. An exaggeration that had been my friend for twenty years but never my lover. It's a miracle our friendship never train wrecked, even while changing direction and picking up speed. One year I thought I had to have Carla or I'd die. I did not have her nor did I die.

We had started working at the museum at approximately the same time but Carla had quickly gone beyond her research tasks. The administration recognized a forceful, entertaining personality who could, with training, handle large crowds on tour. In time, her speciality had become smaller, more intimate groupings of foreign dignitaries and other V.I.P.'s. I had steadily risen in the museum hierarchy from underling in the research department to be the Administrative Executive of Research. My years of night classes and diligent toiling had made me a knowledgeable force whose expertise was finally recognized and appreciated. My wife and daughter

were enormously proud of my latest promotion and we had just returned from a family vacation in Mexico. We had hoped the hot sun would warm the chill in the marriage. My career had required a great deal of compassion and co-operation. We had survived but not without some casualties.

Carla and my wife were not fond of one another, each believing that the other side-tracked my energies. "She is constantly taking advantage of your friendship," my wife would mutter into her pillow. "and me." I admit I was railroaded emotionally by both of them- being in love with Carla and never being able to catch her and catching my wife but not being in love with her. I must have loved my wife once but gone now are the breathlessness, the fluttering, the energy of being in love. Sometimes I catch myself sighing, longing, aching for a bright, blue summer day while living through the bleak, gray months of winter. Our love had slipped noiselessly out of town.

Carla's bright red lipstick, the jet black hair-spiked now and moussed to new wave perfection- the tortoise shell prescription sunglasses poked around the corner of my office. Something was up. The usual bravado, the sashay didn't enter to to entice me, but rather from the wide sensual mouth came but one word, uttered in a staged, graveled whisper with just a hint of question, of uncertainty so out of character that it caught me off guard. She whispered, "Surpriiisssse!"

She always surprises me. I never know

when she'll call or show up. When she does appear, I can expect the unusual, an adventure in three part harmony that will have me laughing so hard my sides ache but one that may leave a nagging residual disbelief. Astonishment. Just last year, she returned from Egypt after being on an archaeological dig with a man of questionable ethics and background. He had two different passports; he claimed they were issued for banking security reasons. However, he was a sleazy, low level spy but never asked Carla for fear that I might find out. She had to carry large amounts of cash in her luggage on that trip, and I let it all float by when she mentioned what a pain that was. She had brought back some beautiful artifacts which the museum had bought for a hefty price. She was doing just fine.

Carla adored being the center of attention and would immediately assume the spot in the limelight with no coaxing. One night after a formal reception at an Embassy, a crowd of us piled into taxis and headed for our favorite night spot. Once there, Carla told us tales of her latest amour, who happened to be a prince.

"Did I know leaving with the Prince against protocol? Noo! He's the big shot so I figure he knew what was correct and all that. I was just an invited guest, who would love to see the royal gardens by moonlight. I didn't know they were so large and so delicious!"

She began to act as if on stage, doing monologue, joke after joke, poking acute fun at herself and her situation with rapier precision. She is cutting, ruthless and hysterically funny. She is hot. She is on. She is on a hot roll; her favorite expression. She had

learned to expose herself at an early age before anyone beat her to it. She had undergone extensive skin grafts on her face and had been required to wear heavy bandages through out the summer of her seventh year. She did not tell this to many.

"Whatever happened to me?" she will shriek in a crowd. "Once you hit thirty, you're no spring chicken. I'm looking real tough these days and have to date whatever decides to come my way. There are no Prince Charming's out there. Just the other night....."

The crowd gathers around her, encourages her, prompts her, wanting her to go the limit and then some. A mob mentality sets in, demanding that she extract more and more from herself to give them. What she receives in return is complete adoration, for the moment anyway.

Wanting to be adored has required enormous energy. I sense this *modus operandi* is growing old, or perhaps we are.

Carla does have a softer side, a caring side that not many see. She was the first one to console me when I had learned that my mother had died. She has always remembered my daughter's birthday. Our bond had begun long before I had married and before she was infamous. We had discussed everything over the years; sex, love, work, books, men, women, hats, hair, shoes, algebra, vacations, and animals. We might not speak for weeks and then pick up right where we had left off, in tune with one another. Years ago it was I who accompa-

nied her to the clinic for her abortion. I had found her a therapist and an apartment and lent her money occasionally. Life had happened and we both knew about one another. Now she was here in my office.

The diamond studded, manicured hand removed the glasss and she collapsed into a chair, immediately searching for an ashtray. Finding none, she extinguished her cigarette in the potted plant sitting on my desk.

"Ugh. I know that was tacky but I've got my troubles these days so just bear with me. I have to get off these cancer sticks. They are ruining my complexion. Why I pay that woman Helga a pile of dough to clean my face I'll never know. I'm afraid to stop. A person could fall into some of these wrinkles and never be heard from again. I'm not laughing about these laugh lines.

"How are you? I'm good and bad. No sleep for two days and I think I'm beginning to hallucinate because of it. Got any coffee around this place? Better yet, why don't you and I go get a couple of drinks and I can tell you the whole complicated story."

I gathered my things and left the office for the day, I knew that I'd be in no mood to continue work after being with Carla. Things just happen, odd events, strange encounters materialize when around her. It was late in the day so we decided to go to dinner. One does not grab a bite to eat with Carla; one goes to dinner and dines. I called home with a lame excuse but it worked.

Once we were seated in a sufficiently posh establishment, The Box Car, we overheard an argument at the next table between a man and a woman. They were arguing about the man's spending habits,

obviously extravagant to the woman. Carla and I were delighted at first to be the recipients of such juicy gossip. Suddenly the woman choked, grabbed her throat and stared wildly at the man. He sat placidly there, bemused, paralytic. Carla sprang from her chair, upsetting it, stood behind the woman, wrapped her arms around her and with clenched fists, pushed right below the breastline. This dislodged the piece of food from the woman's throat and sent it flying into her husband's eye. He proceeded to scream that this was planned to injure him, a retaliative move. "You swine!", he screamed. "How dare you spit in my eye. I'm blind now. The world has gone blank."

The woman fainted, crashed to the floor, knocked down a busboy who had a water pitcher in his hand. Water flew through the room, diners screamed, furniture overturned as people leaped to their feet. It was chaos. The woman lay unconscious but breathing on the floor; none of us knew what to do. It was next to impossible to ignore her as the whimpering man complained about his impaired vision. An ambulance was summoned by Carla's insistence and we all waited. All the diners sat there, fidgeting with their salad forks, drinking copiously, clearing their throats and avoiding eye contact. There was no conversation.

Carla instructed the maitre d' to gather all the waiters, have them crouch next to the woman, slip their arms uniformly under her and rise together. It was in this fashion the loud and now silent woman exited the dining room,

carried on platform of arms, Carla leading the procession.

These makeshift paramedics placed the woman on the couch in the ladies' lounge until the ambulance arrived. Carla was greeted with a burst of applause from the customers, the waiters, and finally from me. The maitre d' was effusive in his thanks to her, for in her own indomitable way she had saved the day.

Carla openly smiled and nodded her head like a queen greeting her subjects. This room was hers. Then in a clear voice she announced "What some people will do to get out of paying a check is amazing!" The room exploded with laughter, good spirits returned, and dinner continued. Ah, Carla.

Our oversized Minton china plates arrived quietly, dwarfing the nouvelle food appealingly arranged as a flower. Carla heartily attacked her meal, while I picked at mine. We both drank a great deal of wine.

"My dear, dear friend," began Carla as the coffee was delivered by one of the numerous unobtrusive waiters. "Do you ever wonder why we never married? We both have had fleeting moments of fantasy when we could run off into the sunset together. They just never occurred at the same time. It's as if we were, well, trains passing by one another; me roaring head long to God knows where not seeing anything thru the windows for I was going too fast. You always reminded me of the engine that keeps saying 'I think I can, I think I can.' Well you did. You made it to the top of your hill. You have all that I do not but I'm catching up.

"There has been a wondrous occurrence in my

life. I have fallen madly, passionately in love with, alas, another married man. But this one adores me and wants to marry me. "Carla's eyes softened and glistened with tears about to spill over and run down her cheeks. I reached across the table and placed my hand in hers. She squeezed it tightly, then continued.

"I've made a lot of foolish choices in my life and you know just about every one of them. But this man is not a mistake for me; he is my salvation. Do you know what I did last night? I cooked him pork chops! Threw them in a pan and fried them. Can you imagine me frying pork chops?" Her eyes opened in disbelief. "It was a regular meat and potatoes night!"

I admitted that not only couldn't I imagine her frying pork chops, that I had no idea she even owned a frying pan. This in itself was a revelation. I tried to smile but found the lump in my throat was requiring all my attention as it was blocking the raspberry torte from sliding down my throat.

"This is a whole new track for me," Carla continued. "Domesticity. It's all rather new and rather, well sorta nice. But I feel like my head can't catch my heart when I am with him. I'm rushing along, caught up in this, this love thing. It's made me want things like pork chops and P.T.A. meetings and a house filled with photograph albums. Absurd? Of course. That's me.

"He wants me to go to Australia with him and wait for his divorce to come through. What can I do? This is it, you know. This is the Love

of my life. I've waited a long time for this and now, well, it's all complicated. But I feel like this is my chance for some long lasting happiness. If I can't have you." This last remark was aimed at my heart and it hit the bull's eye.

I knew there was no stopping her. She was going. She couldn't stop herself from careening through this life of hers. She could kick and scream all she wanted but she was destined to go full speed ahead.

I was filled with a sadness that welled up from the bottom of my soul and overtook my heart like dark rain clouds across a sunny sky. To say I would miss her was ludicrously simple. She was not going on some bizarre trip; she was changing course and leaving. It was as if a part of me was being wrenched away, severed forever. I had no claims on her happiness. I could not stop her if I tried and I did not try.

We sat there for a long time. I wanted her to be happy and I told her that. She was taking off.

On the sidewalk outside the restaurant, we embraced for a moment, inhaling and savoring the sweetness. I climbed into my car; she turned to walk home. Her pace was halting, then stronger and faster. In the blink of a tear she was around the corner.

SHORT STORY

SERENE SISTER SARAH

Julie Bump

Bittersweet music was flowing throughout the grand auditorium like a breath of fresh air. Outside, the whistling wind and thick snow was mounting higher into the frozen night. Sarah peered out of the golden ballroom window, to see the reflection of the warmth inside onto the white snow. As she looked down the street, she could catch a glimpse of the coffee house on the corner in between snow drifts. When the snow cleared she could see the customers inside folded over their coffee cups like ferns. Suddenly, feeling rather ill she turned to the colorful dance floor and decided that she must escape from here, now.

Sarah, wearing a shimmering pink taffeta ball gown, whisked through the large dancing crowd. She felt like a tiny sailboat on rough waters, being pushed and pulled in all directions. Sarah eyed the door and knew where she would exit. As Sarah reached the doorway, Phillip reached Sarah. He reached out and grabbed her fleeting hand. Phillip was Sarah's past, although the commitment of love was always within. They were romance at its extreme, and as he stared deep into Sarah's eyes, they could both see the reflected emotion clearly remaining alive within. With out words, Phillip relayed a supportive, caring

message to Sarah. He was concerned where she was going and what irrational mistake he could rectify, before it occurred.

Sarah had seen this look before and easily picked up on it. "This is the shelter she left behind," she thought. "He always wants what's best for him or what he sees as the best thing for me, but I may not want that. Although it may hurt me, I will always learn from it. I have made my decision to go now, and I must. Phillip, I am going, and you can't stop me." All of this was said without words and yet it was so clear to both of them. Sarah pulled her hand out of his firm grasp and gave a caring but stern smile. With a swift but dignified turn, Sarah was out the door.

The snow chilled her fingertips as she fled down the cobblestone street. Before she realized it, she arrived at the coffee house, the one she had seen out the ballroom window. For a moment Sarah hesitated outside on the desolate street. Sarah's heart was at a rapid beat as she put her conceit aside and set in out of Mother Nature's wintry reach.

Once she was inside Sarah realized that her porcelain gown and cameo necklace clashed with the smokey, dimly lit, corduroy interior of the house. Immediately she felt threatened. This environment was uncharacteristic of Sarah and it made her uneasy. She went directly to a corner stool at the bar and quietly removed her black woolen cloak, unsuccessfully attempting to blend

in with the others. The waitress came over to her and remarked, "You looked chilled, honey...Coffee?" Sarah's eyes met the woman's and Sarah replied, "Please."

Sarah's eyes reflected a melancholy feeling that was deep inside. Somehow Sarah felt that the waitress understood. Sarah now needed so many answers to her so many questions. Answers that only she could provide. All forgotten for the moment while she ordered a simple cup of coffee. The waitress disappeared rather quickly behind the bar and Sarah wondered why she ran away so fast. "To get the coffee," Sarah guessed.

Sarah, with her china-doll face, looked around the room discreetly. A familiar feeling of guilt, although she was now calm, came over her. Seeing three aged men at the bar and three aged women sitting around a booth, Sarah couldn't help but stare. The women were knitting, reading and talking silently at the table. The men, all drinking coffee, looked as if every ounce of their philosophy was steaming from their mugs. "Wealth," Sarah thought, "What good is it if you are not happy?... What good is it if you are not whole?"

Then the waitress reappeared with a coffee and a paper napkin, and a spoon. She placed it all on the counter in front of Sarah,

and smiled. Sarah smiled also and picked up the spoon. She noticed the antique craftsmanship involved in the smooth sterling silver." Timeless in its beauty." "Similar to the waitress," Sarah thought. Finding herself observing the woman from afar; plain yet particular, striking yet sentimental, languid yet lavish. Sarah recognized the beauty hiding under the age of both utensils.

While sipping her coffee Sarah again gazed around the small lounge, focusing on the corner booth. One woman looked up, caught Sarah's eye and seemed to give an understanding, but very slight grin. Thoughts of the evenings tragic events ran through Sarah's memory. She felt trapped inside an endless nightmare in which you are too scared to scream. Her heart began to flutter as she felt rather light headed. The faded atmosphere of the quiet coffee house was the only placid place where Sarah found a sense of true comfort, finally.

After her mug was refilled at the counter she began to feel more relaxed. She thought about her unclear past, the sister that she always wished she had. The affluent status that weighed down her family's history. The wealth that governed her every move. Sarah sighed at her reflection in her coffee cup. Suddenly, a painfully happy song came on the dusty juke box in the corner of the lounge. Sarah felt then and there she had no right to be at the coffee house. She paid, clutched her cloak, and swept out of the house in a poetic but final motion. "The snow doesn't feel as cold now." Sarah inwardly contemplated the weather outside.

Meanwhile back at the coffee house, time seemed to remain still. The waitress cleared away Sarah's order off the wooden bar. She noticed the plum lipstick smudged on the napkin from Sarah's perfect mouth. "Stark white on top of rich plum." The waitress thought. In a matter of seconds the previous scene, five minutes before hand, all recreated itself in the waitress' mind.

The waitress' visions ran rapid. Sarah's china-doll essence with her cameo necklace and strong but innocent perfume, all were lingering inside the peculiar but particular coffee house.

Silently the waitress vanished behind the inner curtain. She squinted into the looking glass. Her evolutionary femininity no longer camouflaged. Her hair, like her sister's, was arranged and disheveled atop her head. Her mouth parted, like her sister's, speaking a silent metaphor of life. Her small shoulders covered, like her sister's, under a woolen drapery. Then her eyes. Her deep eyes, reverberating the lost, unknown ties of the past. "Yes..." the woman pondered aloud. "Just like my serene sister SARAH", bringing a flow of reality to her identical eyes.

David: Age 3

Bru D. Sogoloff

David shrieks in the middle of the night.

Invades my dream, vibrating me to consciousness

Confused, then awake.

I throw the covers to the other side.

Running to his side, what could be wrong?!

My heart in my throat.

My mind reels with horror.

Is he hurt?!

Is he scared?!

Why does he scream like a Banshee?!

Race to his room.

What's taking so long?!

Open his door.

His eyes meet mine.

Wet cheeks, Big smile.

"I love you, Daddy" was all he said.

A sigh of relief, A hug I give.

"I love you too; sleep well, my son."

ESSAY FIRST PLACE

The Perfect Melon

Lisa Maturo

I woke to the familiar rush sounds of the city's arousal. I yawned and took a deep drag of my cigarette while squinting my eyes from the painful sunrise. Feeling damp and chilled, I lifted myself off the dew-soaked grass with effort, and began my daily walk down the boulevard in search of breakfast and whatever else. I knew I'd have to pull another "eat and run" routine if I wanted steak and eggs.

I sipped coffee and crunched on some toast at a diner I came upon, while looking out the window, and pretending to be watching for the boyfriend I had told the waitress I was waiting for. I pretended to be perplexed that he never arrived, and shocked when I found out that I had no money.

I could hear bits of conversation from the booth behind me, and I became vaguely interested. One woman was telling another woman how thinking too much got her into a rut, and how she doesn't like to think at all anymore. I wanted to turn around and ask her more about it, in a funny sort of way, but decided it to be unwise.

After having steak and eggs and splitting, I spent the afternoon wandering aimlessly about the streets, checking for cans and hazily observing life around me. It was a day like any other I'd had in the past year, up until I went into a grocery store to steal a cantaloupe.

I met him in the produce department while mulling over some melons. He was a petite old man, and he seemed to grow smaller the more I snuck glances at him. He captured my interest by the way he came up beside me and studied the melons in the same fashion as I did. We stood and checked over melons for quite a while. I noticed that he would pick up each one I had rejected.

I knew we were communicating in an odd sort of way, and I began feeling for this little man quickly.

I continued observing our wordless exchange out of the corners of my eyes, and then he spoke. "Have you found the perfect one yet?" he drawled in a raspy voice.

It was a voice that seemed too deep for such a frail, tiny man. It nearly set me off balance for a moment. I looked down at the melon in my hand, and replied that it was difficult to tell, and that I guessed they were all about the same. Then he asked me why I kept looking them over like I had been, if they were all about the same. I tried to turn my head and look into his eyes, but felt unable to. Instead, I looked down at the melon I had in my hands, thinking of a reply. After some time, I said that I didn't know why I didn't just pick any old melon, but that it couldn't hurt to look for the best one. He didn't react at all. I turned to face him, ready to look into his eyes, when he slowly lifted a random melon into his basket. He looked into my eyes and smiled a small smile, crinkling the corners of his mouth. I started to get ready to ask him why he was asking me these questions, and why it mattered to him, but he started wheeling his carriage down the aisle to the grapefruit.

I stood still, watching him for a while before I felt a smile tingling on me. I looked at the melon still in my hands, and stuffed it in my coat, knowing it was perfect.

Serenade

My Friend

by Gregory M. Dweerd

My friend, I hate to do it,
But our friendship just can't last.
The times we shared together
Have faded to the past.

I told you it would happen
Our friendship was bound to end
Although I know you cared
I don't consider you a friend.
Please don't try to argue
But try to understand
That time can change two people
As the tide changes the sand.
Our friendship has been lovely.
But you see it has to end.
For I look at you in a different way,
I've fallen in love with you,
my friend

LOBBY, PLEASE!

Michelle T. Cline

"Hey, watch out!" screeched the young woman. She was six feet tall, with flowing blonde hair, deep azure eyes, and a slender, perfectly-toned figure which matched her unrestrained personality, and her concern for her appearance.

"I apologize, Gabrielle. I didn't notice you approaching the corner, I was scanning my mail," apologized the young man.

"Just watch it next time, okay? I do not want to make a trip to the mail room combat duty!"

"Relax, Gabrielle, will you?"

"Do not order me what to do! Why don't you just do the relaxing?" Gabrielle then scooped up her mail, strutted out of the mail room, and proceeded to take the elevator to her apartment.

The young man stared in awe at her as she left. He was completely fascinated by her.

"Did you pick up the mail, Gabrielle?"

"Yes, Melinda. You got a letter from your folks."

Melinda is Gabrielle's roommate, and most trusted friend. Melinda knows the actual Gabrielle, the little girl who is not as independent as she claims to be. Melinda knows about Gabrielle's little anxieties and nervous habits that other people never notice, such as, Gabrielle constantly tilting her head back to brush the hair way from her neck, peeling off her nail polish under a table, or rubbing her lower lip repeatedly with her index finger. Melinda sensed something was annoying Gabrielle now.

"What is annoying you, Gabrielle?" questioned Melinda. "You seem agitated."

"Nothing. Well, you know that tenant Jim?"

"The man with the spectacular brown eyes?"

"Yes, I mean I guess that is the one. I literally bumped into him in the mail room today, and he was such a jerk!"

"Really?" Melinda had conversed with Jim briefly before and considered him to be extremely pleasant, but she did not disagree with Gabrielle now.

"I do not know what his problem is. He bumps into me, and then has the audacity to tell me to relax!"

"Maybe you just intimidated him. You know how you are sometimes."

Gabrielle is the type of woman who has intense eyes that radiate that certain visage which captures and fascinates most men, and she maintains an overall expression of confidence that makes most women jealous. When she strides by, people constantly stare and cluster around her, attempting to capture her occasional glances. Gabrielle always notices her followings, but she rarely responds to them, knowing that they notice her only for her strikingness, and care not for her genuine self. Melinda sensed that Jim was awed by Gabrielle also.

"Maybe, but he is a jerk! What are your plans this week? How about partying with me and some of my model friends Thursday and Friday?"

"I can't, Gabrielle. I have mid-terms this week. Besides, you know I don't get along with them anymore."

"I know Melinda, I don't always get along with them either."

"Then why do you continue being friends with them?" Melinda already knew the answer.

"Look Melinda, you know I never went to school. Modeling is my career and these people are important to help me achieve my goals. I must meet the right people, and you know it! You have much more going for you than your looks."

"Melinda, I do not want to get into this again," sighed Gabrielle as she sauntered into her bedroom to relax. The conversation with Melinda made her reflect for a moment on her life. She knew that people perceived her as the stereo-typical dumb-blonde, and that they were only concerned with her exterior and cared nothing for her interior. Gabrielle thought of the many men who often approached her with shallow lines. "Buy you a drink honey, and then who knows what else?" or "How about a spin in my Ferrari?" She had never been impressed by these empty lines or by the empty men who spoke them. She thought of women who desired superficial friendships with her, to gain popularity and a chance at her leftovers. Tears began to stream down her face as she thought of the hurt she had endured due to exploitive and manipulative men who wanted only to use her as a trophy on their arms. She remembered how Gary in 5C had propositioned her, "You don't have to utter a sound. Just look spectacular." She remembered being hurt by ignorant, deceitful women, who claimed to be her friends, but were

there only for the parties and never for the tears. She had just begun to wipe away her tears as she thought of the time when she had desperately needed a ride home from a disastrous date. Gabrielle telephoned her friend Sue, since Melinda was out of town.

"Hi, Sue, what a relief that you're there! I need a ride home. I am with this really repulsive man. Could you please pick me up at the pier?"

"No Gabrielle, I'm on my way out to visit my boyfriend, but we will party this weekend when my boyfriend has to work." Click. Sue had hung up the phone on a sobbing Gabrielle.

Gabrielle soon drifted off to sleep and began dreaming the dream that she had most nights. She dreamed of being someplace else other than where she is, and in the arms of her fantasy lover, a man she knows she will encounter. A man who will perceive her for her genuine self, and give to her the security, commitment, and the unconditional love that she desperately desire and needs. When she awakes, she realizes that in reality she has no particular or significant lover.

Gabrielle spent the week working and partying with her friends, and as always, convincing herself that attending clubs and parties with privileged men and shallow friends will help her advance her career. She also hopes that her unknowing escorts will lead her to where she will find her fantasy man. At the end of the week the two girls heard a knock at their apartment door.

"Melinda, will you get the door. I am on the telephone."

"Sure, Gabrielle," responded Melinda as she turned to the door. Melinda then opened the door and did not know whether to gasp or laugh.

"Hi. Melinda, right?"

"Yes. You are Jim?"

"Yes. I decided to deliver your mail in person and prevent any unnecessary casualties." Jim handed Melinda the mail in a camouflaged combat hat.

Melinda wondered why it had taken Jim all week to invent such an obvious excuse.

"Who is it, Melinda...?" Gabrielle gasped as she saw Jim standing at the door. "What are you doing here?" Gabrielle demanded.

"Just delivering your mail."

"Well, you did not have to extend yourself."

"Gabrielle, it was kind of him," murmured Melinda.

"Look, Jim, what exactly do you want?"

"Chill out, Gabrielle. You know you have quite an attitude problem!" declared Jim as he slammed the door and exited extremely frustrated.

"Why do you insist on being cruel to him? He is sincere, and he has to be the most attractive man in the building."

"Is that saying much? Besides, I have not noticed anything attractive about him, only irritating."

"Gabrielle, you spend all your nights searching for the so-called perfect man, and it has made you callous and insensitive. Did you ever consider that he may be right in front of your overly made-up face?"

"If you mean Jim, you are wrong, and it wasn't so

long ago when you were a model!"

"There is nothing wrong with being a model, as long as it is your profession, and not your life!"

"Shut-up! You don't know what you are talking about!" shouted Gabrielle as she stomped into her bedroom and slammed the door as if she were a spoiled child.

An hour later Gabrielle strode into the living room.

"I am sorry, Melinda. I don't want to hurt you ever. I am under a lot of pressure lately and I don't know why. I'm sorry, Forgive me?"

"Of course, Gabrielle, but think about what I said." Melinda did now want to argue with Gabrielle since she knew this time it would be useless.

"Listen Melinda, before that was Nicole on the telephone. She asked me to ask you if you would model for her Sunday, just a couple of hours."

"Tell her no thanks. I do not model anymore unless I desperately need the money, and besides, I have to study for mid-terms."

"Fine. Tonight I have a date with that wealthy man Steve, the one who recently moved into the penthouse. When midterms are over, I am taking you out to celebrate!"

That night Gabrielle prepared for her date, and then waited for the elevator, as she was meeting Steve in the lobby. The elevator doors opened and Gabrielle hesitated as she saw Jim leaning against the back wall. Gabrielle went into the elevator, turned, and tried to concen-

trate on the elevator buttons.

"Why, aren't you even going to acknowledge my existence with a simple hello?"

"No, I am not!"

"No? How unfortunate for me, I..." Jim was interrupted in mid-sentence by the screeching and banging of the elevator which had just come to a sudden halt. Suddenly Gabrielle found herself being thrown to the back of the elevator and smack into Jim. Jim caught her shaking body and helped Gabrielle to her feet.

"Let go of me!"

"Certainly!"

"Damn it! The damn elevator is stuck!"

"What an observation, I must say."

"Oh you just shut-up. It is horrible enough that the elevator is stuck. I do not want to have to listen to your crude and obnoxious remarks! Help! Help!" screamed Gabrielle.

"Stop it! I do not want to have to listen to your whining either!"

"Oooh! You are such a jerk!" Gabrielle was enraged.

"Am I? Do I not live up to your standards, my dear? Do I measure up to your over-the-hill desperate millionaires, or your spoiled young studs, or how about your ordinary, boring, but wealthy penthouse types?"

"You b——!"

"News travels quickly in this building. Do you imagine that he is your dream man? The ultimate object of your fantasies?" inquired Jim.

"You don't know what the hell you are talking about, Mr. High and Mighty Yuppie!"

"Oh, but don't I? You know, Gabrielle, any fool with any intelligence and compassion can see what you are about."

"Oh, and I suppose you are that fool?"

"If you put it that way, I suppose I am."

"You are mistaken."

"Am I? Am I mistaken about the shallow life that you lead, using men and at the same time being hurt by them?"

"You b——!" screamed Gabrielle with every ounce of breath she possessed. Tears came to her eyes and she tried to pound her fists into Jim's chest. Jim caught her arms in mid air and pulled her close to him.

"Now that's the second time you've said that," smiled Jim as he stared into Gabrielle's blazing eyes. Gabrielle suddenly felt herself go weak as Jim held her now quivering body and pressed his lips hard against hers. The two were intensely involved with each other and did not realize that the elevator had started up again and had gone to the lobby where the doors opened.

"Gabrielle?" murmured an insecure voice.

Gabrielle and Jim finally looked at the man staring at them and then back at each other. They grinned, and then Gabrielle took hold of Jim's hand, yanking him from the elevator.

"Follow me. Sorry, Steve." Gabrielle apologized to Steve as she and Jim strode across the lobby and out the front doors, leaving Steve and the entire building in shock.

Moonless Night

by Lisa Maturo

I saw the moon falling down to

earth tonight, while driving in

the swelling height.

Sky lines and bi-planes started

whirling around the edges of the

sky, as the trees wrapped around

my head - tucking me in for the night.

I drove fast into the mast of

the veiling sky tonight, and for the

first time, I saw the stars for what

they are - in my car tonight.

I slid home through the skidding skies,

and the air was crisp and light - it washed

me clean of the stream of poised skies

teetering in my wavering heart.

Tonight I really saw the moon drop,

in my car - it fell in front of me

with a splash.

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